



HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS

Helping Texans
Better Their Lives

2020 – Healthy Webb County, Adult Nutrition & Health

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Relevance:

In 2015, rising obesity, infectious diseases, and limited health care access were identified as contributing low quality of life for many areas and community members in South Texas. Excessive weight and inactivity are highly correlated to the increased incidence of chronic diseases. This led to the increase of Healthy South Texas programming in the 27 selected South Texas counties. Today, 35% of Webb County adults reported being in fair to poor health, 38% of the adult community reporting as obese and 29% reporting as physically inactive. In 2020, 377 deaths under the age of 75 were reported from diseases of the heart and on average, our Webb County community feels mentally unhealthy 4.5 days of the month. In Texas, diabetes prevalence of adults diagnosed is 10% of the population and 19% remain uninsured to receive medical care.

In order to combat these habits and consequent diseases, increased physical activity and improved eating habits have been associated with a greater ability to manage the complications of certain chronic diseases and delay the onset of the disease in individuals at risk. As a response, AgriLife has developed healthy lifestyle programs that can address these issues with an evidence-based approach through education.

Response:

In order to increase nutrition, health, wellness and physical activity programs in Webb County and counteract the rising statistics in obesity, chronic diseases and physical inactivity, a Healthy Webb County plan was conducted which included nutrition-focused programs under the Healthy South Texas initiative. These programs included: *Dinner Tonight: Healthy Cooking School, Health Talk Express, and Cooking Well with Diabetes*; programs implemented through the partnership and collaboration with United Independent School District and Texas A&M International University, , and the continuation of the *Webb County – Healthy South Texas Coalition* through community partners such as United Health Care, Driscoll Health Care, TAMIU-Wellness, Laredo I.S.D., United, I.S.D. and City of Laredo Public Libraries.

Results:

Throughout September 2019 through August of 2020, two *Dinner Tonight: Healthy Cooking School* programs, one *Cooking Well with Diabetes*, and four *Health Talk Express* programs, and one county-wide *Walk Across Texas* program was implemented. Participants included Webb County community members, United and Laredo I.S.D. employees, such as teachers and staff, Webb County employees, and Texas A&M International University staff. There was a total of 145 participants in areas of nutrition and health, 292 participants in wellness and physical activity, and a recurring Healthy Coalition membership of six. Post-program survey evaluations for *Dinner Tonight* and *Walk Across Texas* showed a favorable satisfaction rate of 74%, with 70% of participants stating they would return for another Texas A&M AgriLife Extension program.

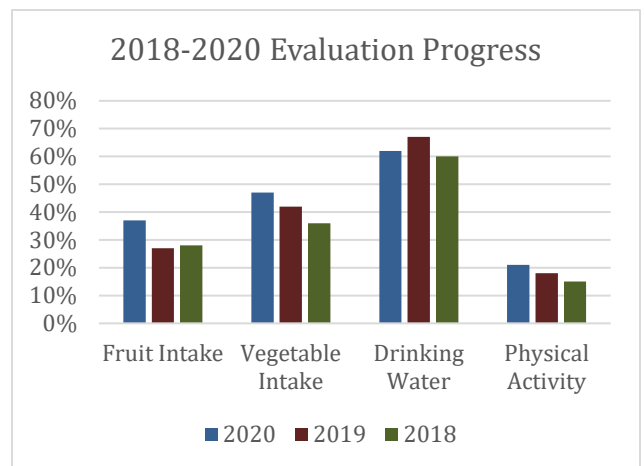
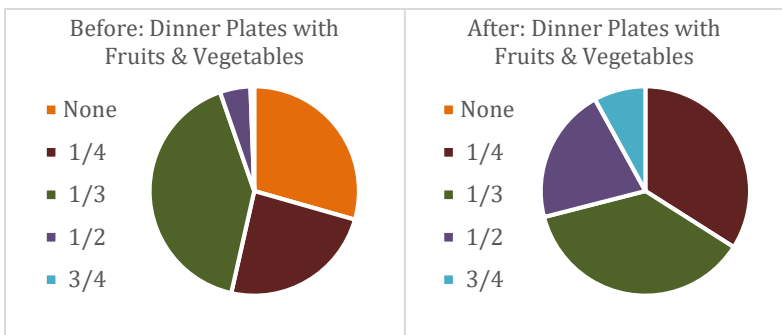
Overall:

Volunteerism:

With a total of 47 volunteers assisting throughout the year’s programs, volunteers mostly contributed to the day-to-day implementation of the Walk Across Texas and Cooking Well with Diabetes programs, the planning and coordination of the Dinner Tonight events and the Health Talk Express sessions. These tasks and activities include, but are not limited to, the attendance coordination of other staff and faculty at campuses such as San Isidro, Amparo Gutierrez, Clark, Col. Santos Benavides, and Nye Elementary School, Los Obispos and Trautmann Middle School; front office staff that worked on marketing and advocating for parent volunteers to attend programs in order to receive campus recognition. Day-of activities led by volunteers included set-up and dismantling of equipment and materials before and after programs, leading the registration table responsibilities and hosting as emcees for the events.

Future Plans:

In order to increase adult participation, plans to increase the amount of school campuses offered to include schools that are not actively participating in the Healthy Texas School Recognition Program will be offered. This includes expanding to Laredo I.S.D., Webb Consolidated School District and other local colleges such as Laredo College and Laredo College – South. Partnerships with United Health Care and Driscoll will expand to include adult nutrition programs coordinated directly to their clientele, aside from county-wide programs.



VALUE
Obesity Prevention and Reduction



The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service engages children and adults in programs that teach them how to eat nutritious foods and engage in regular physical activity to promote health and reduce their risk for obesity. The Texas public benefits through a healthier population, reduced health care costs, and increased productivity.

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE
Providing Solutions